AU/ACSC/061/1999-04

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS AND GENDER

By

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A Research Report Submitted to the Faculty

In Partial Fulfillment of the Graduation Requirements

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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

April 1999

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Contents

Preface

After serving in the Air Force for the past 16 years, I have come to the realization that there are still many hurdles facing women as they strive for senior leadership positions in our armed forces. While this paper served to highlight some of the more recent events and attitudes surrounding the topic of leadership effectiveness and gender, it does not comprise the final conclusion on this topic. This paper serves to inform the reader that there has been much progress in terms of women and the way they are perceived as leaders. But on the other hand, this research leaves room for further analysis on the topic and begs the question, is we really giving full and equals access to top positions to both our men and women in uniform?

I would like to thank my research advisor, Lt Col Branch, for her assistance in putting this, my first, and perhaps my only, thesis paper of my career, together. She provided valuable guidance throughout the process and without her aid, this paper would not have been possible. I would also like to thank the professionals at the Air University Library for their assistance in helping me locate all my reference material with ease. They are worth their weight in gold, and helped me find pertinent information quickly and painlessly.

AU/ACSC/061/1999-04

Abstract

This research paper on the subject of Leadership Effectiveness and Gender attempts to conduct a focused amount of research to answer the question about the correlation between gender and leadership effectiveness. It specifically looks at the current definitions of leadership and looks at some historical background information relating to the more common theories that relate to leadership and effectiveness. It also delves into some of the more traditional leadership theories as well as some of the more modern day theories and attempts to identify why there is still a considerable absence in top military leadership by female officers. Of the 284 Air Force general officers on active duty today, there are only 7 females among them, for a 2% representation. My claim is that there is more of a hidden bias by men against women than there is a logical reason for this under-representation of women in the senior ranks. This paper focuses on this sensitive subject area, and hopefully raises readers' awareness of the presence of this bias that still exits today.

This research was conducted by using a variety of current books and periodical articles on the topic of leadership and gender and effectiveness. It is by no means an exhaustive study, but merely points out there are really no good explanations as to why women are still so underrepresented in the senior ranks besides the age old stereotypes that keep women lagging behind men in the highest ranks. This paper shows that there is virtually no empirical evidence that suggests that simply by being male, one has the

corner on the "leadership market." And it is my hope that this paper leads to more in-depth study on the leadership and gender aspects of military leadership as we head into the next century. Women are here to stay in the US military, and it would serve us all well to not deny senior leadership positions to those well-deserving women, simply because they are women.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Leadership is "the process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals."

—Roach & Behling, 1984

Leadership is a topic that comes up in most discussions at least weekly in our professional lives, yet this topic has been the dealt with mainly in terms of using male role models and studying field generals from past wars. This has left a void in the development of many potential senior female military leaders, and thus the purpose of this paper, which is to examine the correlation between leadership effectiveness and gender, "fact or bias."

Qualities of Effective Leaders

There are certain basic qualities or characteristics that most people associate with leadership. Some of these include self-reliant, independent, assertive, risk taker, dominant, ambitious, and self-sufficient. Most people would agree that people whom posses these attributes are often labeled as "leaders." Effective leadership can be categorized in the following way. An effective leader is someone who motivates a person or a group to accomplish more than they would have otherwise accomplished without that leader's involvement. We can liken this to the sporting arena where a team

1

is comprised of individual players; each with certain skills, but the team is honed into a finely tuned instrument by virtue of the coach orchestrating them into a cohesive unit. In this manner, and only with the proper motivation and care, will this group of individuals gel into a team and accomplish more together than they ever could on their own merits. With this framework set in place, one would argue that leadership effectiveness is not gender-specific, but there seem to be many attributes that are found in both males and females that lend themselves to becoming an effective leader.

After researching many references on this topic, and reading many of the empirical data available on leadership effectiveness and gender, one is left with the opinion that there is still ample opportunity for research and case studies in this area. We must come up with some definitive facts on the key ingredients of effective leadership and determine if gender plays a pivotal role in this.

This paper is limited by time and scope and does not pretend to be an all-encompassing review of leadership and gender issues. It merely serves to bring to the fore some recent findings and some current articles concerning this topic as food for thought. There will be references to several studies and current findings as they were documented, and this paper will provide some interpretations of this data as it relates to the confines of this study. The goal of this paper is to stimulate the thinking of the reader as he/she participates in the armed forces in either the leader or the follower role, and to assist in clearing away some of the bias that still clouds the rise of females into top leadership roles.

Definitions of Leadership

The opening quote of this paper listed only one of many definitions of leadership. This paper will list a few more well accepted definitions to start off this discussion and these definitions will form the basis of our understanding as we tackle the remainder of the process of determining the correlation between leadership effectiveness and gender.

Some common definitions of leadership include the following: "The creative and directive force of morale "(Munson, 1921). Or this definition is "The process by which an agent induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner" (Bennis, 1959). Yet another definition is as follows, "The presence of a particular influence relationship between two or more persons" (Hollander & Julian, 1969). Still another reads, "Directing and coordinating the work of group members" (Fiedler, 1967). Leadership is also, "An interpersonal relation in which others comply because they want to, not because they have to" (Merton, 1969). "Transforming followers, creating visions of the goals that may be attained, and articulating for the followers, the ways to attain those goals" (Bass, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). And lastly, leadership is "Actions that focus resources to create desirable opportunities" (Campbell, 1991).[1]

Why does this matter?

At this point in the reading, one will wonder why this topic has been broached in an academic setting. One reason is that there needs to be a more equitable approach in the leadership training of our mid-level officers. If we continue to only study the careers of field generals of WW1 and WW2, and Desert Storm as the sole template for leadership, we will continue to deprive our female officer role models they can look up to and identify with, as they climb the ladder of success. We must start looking at alternative

models of leadership, and provide both our men and women with models of leadership that transcend gender.

There is a large body of evidence that firmly states that leadership is in large part, gender neutral, and today's Air Force offers a vast array of opportunities for both men and women to seek and to excel in a myriad of leadership positions. Therefore, the goal of this paper is to open the door to alternative views on leadership effectiveness and gender. Hopefully, this will enable the reader to come away with a much broader vision of what military leadership effectiveness is, and we can start to peel away the onion of bias still found throughout our military environment regarding leadership and gender issues.

Leadership and Gender Perspectives

Throughout history, many have come to believe that leadership is a traditionally masculine activity. Judith A. Kolb talked about this in her article when she stated that "Kanter observed that if women in organizations are to emerge as leaders, it is important that they be perceived as individuals who can influence or motivate others."[2] A look at research on this dating back to the 1970's indicated that there was a tremendous amount of gender bias regarding women's achievements in the business sector. More frightening is that as late as 1991, much of this gender bias still exists as seen by the following. A study conducted in 1991 by Shimanoff and Jenkins revealed the following: "when we reviewed this literature we were struck by the prejudice against women. Research has demonstrated that there are far more similarities than differences in the leadership behaviors of women and men, and that they are equally effective. Still, women are less

likely to be pre-selected as leaders, and the same leadership behavior is often evaluated more positively when attributed to a male than to a female. (p.504)[3] Findings dated this recently should be cause for alarm and this is but a small example of the most recent data on this subject.

Other similar studies follow suit, when it was reported that group composition could influence leadership emergence. Bunyi and Andrews (1985) found that when males were in the majority, they emerged as leaders 100% of the time. When females were in the majority, females did emerge as leaders but not beyond the expectations one would have on the basis of chance. In contrast, Schneier and Bartol (1980) observed that the likelihood that a female would emerge as a leader did increase as the number of women in the group increased."[4]

Yet another study, taken in 1978, revealed virtually no difference in the numbers of men and women that emerged as leaders.[5] The Kent and Moss study of 1994 "noted in their study that women were slightly more likely than men to be perceived as leaders by group members when the percentage of women per group was controlled statistically." [6] While these studies are interesting to reflect upon, Kolb goes on to state that in no other study has it been shown that women were chosen to be leaders more often than men.

Gender Role Orientation

There have been numerous studies done examining the aspect of how a person views him or herself in terms of being masculine, feminine or androgynous. A study conducted in 1990 showed that female students in masters of business administration program viewed themselves higher in masculine characteristics than in feminine characteristics. Findings from this study may indicate that "masculine gender role characteristics, rather

than biological sex, may be the crucial aspect of gender that is related to leader emergence."[7] This study also showed that women that are high on the organizational charts are often rated much higher on the masculinity scale than are women in the lower ranks of the organization. Further analysis in a similar study revealed that "there was no biological sex difference in the self or group perceptions of leadership."[8] Findings from this report also indicated that males generally self reported higher on the scale of leadership as proven by the following. "Masculinity was significantly correlated with both self-reported leader emergence and group reported leader emergence," [9] and supports a major hypothesis of this study.

Predictors of Leadership Emergence

Again in the study mentioned above, the fact surfaced that "masculinity was the strongest predictor of self-reported leader emergence."[10] Feminine traits did not lend themselves to contributing to the women thinking of themselves as leaders. Only the females with strong masculine attributes considered themselves leaders with any degree of frequency. In addition, "masculine and androgynous individuals were combined and compared with data from feminine and undifferentiated individuals. The combined masculine and androgynous group members described themselves more frequently as demonstrating knowledge and having experience than did the feminine and undifferentiated group members".[11] "There was also one significant difference for group reports. Feminine and undifferentiated group members were described by other members as soliciting input with greater frequency than were masculine and androgynous group members." [12]

Discussion of Findings

As the essence of this paper purports, we find "As expected, the results for quantitative and qualitative analyses confirmed that there is virtually no difference in self or group assessments of leader emergence attributable to biological sex."[13]

Other interesting findings from this study include data regarding the notion of taking charge. "Females described themselves with greater frequency than did males as taking charge. Other group members seen as contributing ideas, suggestions, and opinions described males with greater frequency. This latter finding is noteworthy because people who talk more frequently are identified as leaders more often than less talkative members of a group." [14] This "finding also shows that in classroom situations, females described themselves as leaders in a higher frequency than did males, and indicates that, at least in classroom situations and on anonymous questionnaires, females are not inhibited in acknowledging their own leadership capabilities."[15]

Historical Conclusions

In the above studies, the stage has been set for subsequent dialog by providing a quick glimpse of some of the more recent data on leadership emergence and gender. Although not even remotely exhaustive in nature, this does beg the question of looking at some modern leadership theories, while providing a foundation from which to look at the rest of the topics that will be presented as we delve further into this issue.

Notes

[1] Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy. 1993: Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. Richard D. Irwin, INC, p. 6

[2] Kolb, Judith A. Are We Still Stereotyping Leadership? SMALL GROUP RESEARCH, Vol.28 No. 3, August 1997 p. 370

[3] ibid, p. 371

Notes

[4] ibid, p. 372
[5] ibid, p. 372
[6] ibid, p. 373
[7] ibid, p. 374
[8] ibid, p. 381
[9] ibid, p. 383
[10] ibid, p. 385
[11] ibid, p. 386
[12] ibid, p. 386
[13] ibid, p. 387
[14] ibid, p. 388
[15] ibid, p. 388

Chapter 2

Contingency Leadership Theories

There is no necessary connection between the desire to lead and the ability to lead, and even less to the ability to lead somewhere that will be to the advantage of the led…Leadership is more likely to be assumed by the aggressive than by the able, and those who scramble to the top are more often motivated by their own inner torments than by any demand for their guidance.

- Bergen Evans, *The Spoor of Spooks and Other Nonsense (*1954)

In this chapter, we will focus on some of the better known theories on leadership which will allow us to better decipher the nuances related to the issue of effectiveness as it relates to gender. The premise for doing such is to establish a foundation of facts pertaining to commonly held beliefs on leadership. Having a thorough understanding of some of the more common leadership theories can best accomplish this. In this chapter, we will look specifically at three of the more popular leadership theories, the Normative Decision Model, the Situational Leadership Theory, and the Contingency Theory. In each theory, we will focus on the aspects of leadership emergence vice the follower or the situational aspects of these models. This will pave the way for the next area of focus, where we will take a closer look at the specific characteristics of leadership as defined by these models, and see if and how gender plays a role.

Normative Decision Model

The normative decision model "was designed to improve some aspects of leadership effectiveness."[1] In other words, this model tries to explain what "ought to happen" rather than describing what "does happen" in a decision-making environment.[2] This model implies that "leaders could often improve group performance by using an optimal amount of participation in the decision making process."[3] This type of model, by its very nature, would lead us to conclusion that this form of decision making by a leader is very much gender-neutral. This model also looks at the nature of a decision by a leader and the effects of that decision as it applies to the follower. If the decision is a low-level decision that has no great impact on the group, there is much less resistance to a decision imposed upon the group. This is not the case when the decision has major impacts on the group. In the latter case, and "in order to make it easier for leaders to determine how much participation subordinates should have to optimize decision quality and acceptance, Vroom and Yetton (1973) incorporated …questions into a decision tree."[4] This decision tree attempts to lead the decision-maker down a path that will lend to picking the most appropriate decision in a given circumstance. The nature of the decision or problem and the timelines associated with the decision also determine if this process should be used. For example, if the decision is a very minor one with little consequence for the group, this decision tree may not be the best tool for that problem. However, when the decision is a major one, with vast implications for many, this tree, and the input or buy-in from the group during the process, is essential. The most interesting aspect of this model is that it does point out that those leaders who employ this model often reach the best decision. However, it also stresses that just because the best decision is reached using this model, it

does not imply that these leaders were more effective overall. "The latter findings again point out that both the leadership process and leadership effectiveness are complex phenomena; being a good decision maker is not enough to be a good leader (although it certainly helps)."[5] Nothing in this study pointed to gender as being an ingredient for effective leadership.

The Situational Leadership Theory

The second theory to explore regarding leadership effectiveness is the situational leadership theory (SLT). This theory addresses the optimum way for leaders to address their leadership style depending on the type of follower involved.[6] The two different approaches to leadership studied in this theory are the task behavior and the relationship behavior nature of the work being done by the followers. Task behavior is associated with a more directive approach where the leader "spells out the responsibilities of an individual or group."[7] The results of this theory point out that in "some situations, high levels of task but low levels of relationship behaviors were effective; in other situations, just the opposite was true."[8] The theory goes on to talk about how the maturity level of the individual, in terms of both psychological and job maturity, are highly related to the type of leadership style that would be the most effective. While this theory goes a bit deeper into the attributes of the follower compared to the normative decision model, the authors of this theory "have simply defined leadership effectiveness as those leader behaviors that match the prescriptions of SLT. They have not presented any evidence that leaders who behave according to the model's prescriptions actually have a higher unit performance indices, better performing or more satisfied subordinates, or a more

favorable organizational climate" (Vecchio, 1987).[9] This theory also does not even attempt to correlate leadership effectiveness and gender, but merely points out how important the follower and the situation are in terms of producing effective leadership techniques. The bottom line to this theory is that flexibility and tending to each situation and subordinate according to their job and personal maturity level is a time-tested approach to attaining favorable results from the leadership perspective.

The Contingency Model

This theory, in contrast to the situational leadership theory, "suggests that leader effectiveness is primarily determined by *selecting the right kind of leader for a certain situation or changing the situation* to fit the particular leader's style."[10] The basis of this theory is one, which takes into consideration both the leaders' style and the situation the leader finds him/herself in.   This theory, unlike the previous two we looked at, takes a much greater look at the individual characteristics of the leader vice focusing on the follower or the situation.

This model suggests that basic personality characteristics are established early in life and the experiences a leader has had in the past will determine what type of leadership style they will use. This model, unlike many others, states that it may be in the best interest of the group to make sure the leader picked for a certain job or task is of a compatible type for the type of job required. This model seems to contradict many other models, which talk about altering the situation, and not focusing on the leader, to get the best and most positive work done. This theory, like the other two, still doesn't "really consider the variety of leadership traits found to be related to leadership effectiveness

(like self-monitoring); the leader's and the follower's values, attitudes, and preferences; the cohesiveness, norms, or size of the group; or task, organizational design and culture, or environmental factors that can affect the leadership process."[11] While this theory has many flaws, it is a good starting point to lead into more detailed analysis of the subject of leadership, as it has stimulated much additional research in this area. [12]

Gender-Related Issues of Transformational and Transactional Leadership

This study investigated gender differences in transformational and transactional leadership, and gender-related stereotypes. Results indicated that there were no differences in the way the primarily Caucasian subordinates evaluated their actual male and female managers. There were, however, differences in the ratings of stereotypic male versus stereotypic female leaders on transformational and transactional leadership, but only by female respondents. Finally, congruence between ratings of actual managers and ratings of stereotypic managers was found primarily for male respondents. Results suggest that stereotypes may be one explanation for gender differences found in prior research on transformational and transactional leadership."[13]

This portion of the paper examines the research conducted on the actual leadership differences between men and women and the gender stereotypes that are still prevalent in the area of leadership effectiveness and gender. This section will examine two possible reasons for the continued under-representation of women at high levels of leadership, and will attempt to prove or disprove two fundamental premises. The first premise states there may be actual differences in the leadership behaviors exhibited by men and women. This line of thinking suggests that members of one gender exhibit effective leadership

behaviors more than members of the other gender. The second premise is there may be stereotypes associated with effective leadership that preclude many women from being considered for promotion and/or career development opportunities, because women do not fit a leadership stereotype (Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989). This section will explore both of these explanations for gender differences in transformational and transactional leadership."[14]

Some early studies on this topic include the one done by Eagly and Johnson in 1990. In this study, "women were found to lead in a more interpersonally oriented style, and men were found to lead in a more task oriented style…"[15] This study further revealed that "women were rated as more democratic or participative while men were rated as more autocratic or directive."[16]

Transformational leadership "occurs when a leader engages with a follower in such a way that both parties are raised to higher levels of motivation and morality with a common purpose."[17] Transactional leadership, "in contrast, is a set of leadership behaviors that emphasizes exchanges or bargains between manager and follower, and focuses on how current needs of subordinates can be fulfilled."[18]

In studies done in the early 1990's, there has been some empirical evidence that suggests that females performed in a more transformational manner as leaders than did males. This study was done using both male and females as subordinates, and lends to the premise that there are gender differences in leadership styles. These gender differences may or may not lend themselves to more effective styles, but it may simply be the style of leadership that will matter the most. As one popular magazine recently

wrote, "Leaders in the next century will lead from the center, gleaning the best ideas from those around them, not from the top."[19]

Druskat (1994) found a similar result when looking at male and female leaders in the religious profession. "Female leaders were evaluated as being more transformational by female subordinates than male leaders who were evaluated by male subordinates."[20] In yet another study by Nass and Avolio (1992), "Druskat (1994) suggests that transformational leadership may be a more feminine style of leading, and is more likely to emerge in all-female organizations where women control the resources and so are less constrained in their leadership styles."[21] These studies lead to some thought provoking ideas, since women have been largely identified as being more transformational, they may in fact, be more accepted as leaders once organizations call for more transformational leaders in the coming years.[22]

The results from the study cited above are not exposed in all samples of this kind. For example "Komives (1991a) investigated differences in transformational and transactional leadership …of residence hall directors and residence hall assistants…and found no significant gender differences in transformational or transactional leadership ratings for residence hall directors across seven campuses."[23] There seems to be conflicting findings in many of the studies and these conflicts "suggest that subordinates in certain types of organizations may share common expectations for appropriate leadership behaviors that should be exhibited by men and women within those contexts."[24]

Stereotypes of Leadership and Gender

A lot of research has been done to explore the premise that there are stereotypes that negatively affect females as being looked at in a positive manner in leadership positions. Some studies have held all other factors constant and gender was the only variable with which to gather a conclusion. For example, Eagly, Makkhijani, and Klonsky (1992) conducted such a study and "found that female leaders were evaluated slightly more negatively than male leaders. Moreover, male subjects had a stronger tendency to devalue women in leadership roles than did female subjects."[25]

One similar study was done by Russell, Rush and Herd (1988), in which they asked women to describe the characteristics they would deem as associated with effective male and effective female leadership styles. "Results …from this study indicated that female leaders were rated higher in consideration and initiating structure…than male leaders."[26] In summary, "the literature shows that there are differences in stereotypes for male and female leaders. Moreover, this literature, with the exception of Russell, *et al.* (1988), suggests that stereotypes often function to the detriment of women."[27] Further, "because women do not fit well with perceivers' images of effective leaders, they may be passed over for promotion and developmental opportunities in favor of men, who are more often associated with leadership (Heilman *et al., 1989)."[28]*

It is research and data such as this described thus far in the paper, that leads to the belief that there are still many obstacles which women must overcome to be perceived as effective leaders. The next portion of the paper will examine some key characteristics and traits normally associated with effective leaders.

Notes

[1] Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy. 1993: Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. Richard D. Irwin, INC, p. 389.

[2] Ibid, p. 392.

[3] Ibid, p. 388.

[4] Ibid, p. 392.

[5] Ibid, p. 395.

[6] Ibid, p. 396

[7] ibid, p. 396

[8] ibid, p. 397

[9] ibid, p. 400.

[10] Ibid, p. 401.

[11] Ibid, p. 409

[12] ibid, p. 410

[13] Maher, Karen J. Gender-Related Stereotypes of Transformational and Transactional Leadership. Sex Roles, Vol 37, Nos. 3/4, 1997, p 209.

[14] Ibid, p. 210

[15] ibid, p. 210

[16] ibid, p. 210

[17] ibid, p. 210

[18] ibid, p. 210

[19] Working Woman, March 1998, p. 30.

[20] ibid, p. 211

[21] ibid, p. 211

[22] ibid, p. 211

[23] ibid, p. 212

[24] ibid, p. 212

[25] ibid, p. 213

[26] ibid, p. 213

[27] ibid, p. 214

[28] ibid, p. 214

Chapter 3

Leadership Characteristics and Gender

There is a cultural ideal in most societies that men are the warriors. This ideal persists despite the fact that women in many nations have participated in military operations and even in warfare as combatants. (Goldman, 1982, Segal, Li, and Segal, 1992; Stanley and Segal, 1992[1]

It is the author's opinion that there still seems to be, in some circles, a belief that women do not belong in the military, and are especially ill-perceived in leadership positions. This has been and will be a topic for debate for years to come. And, as illustrated from the above quotation, many societies that employ women in the military still do not talk about their participation in favorable terms. Even as integrated into the U.S. military as women have become in the past 20 years, there still appears to be a commonly held belief that, while women are tolerated in the ranks, many men still believe that leadership in their domain alone.

There have been attempts to define a specific leadership trait, and this concept deserves some attention at this point in the research. "Campbell (1977) hypothesized that such a trait may well exist but not be directly assessed by traditional measures of personality and intelligence. Both Curphy (1992B) and R. Hogan (1992) have speculated about the components underlying a leadership trait".[2]

Leadership and Intelligence

"Think like a leader…don't wait to be told…take control…that's the essence of leadership."[3]

Intelligence is defined "as a person's all-around effectiveness in activities directed by thought (Cronbach, 1984)."[4] Leadership and intelligence have been studied and there appears to be a correlation between the two and leadership effectiveness.[5] In over 200 studies done and documented since 1963, there is "overwhelming support for the idea that leadership effectiveness or emergence is positively correlated with intelligence."[6] While these findings support the fact that more intelligent people are likely to be good leaders, one cannot conclude that the smartest people are always necessarily the best or most effective leaders.[7] Other studies have shown that while intelligence is positively correlated with effective leadership, being much smarter than your subordinates can actually hinder effective leadership. This is based on the fact that communication between followers and leaders may be impaired if the leader is vastly more intelligent than the group he or she is trying to lead.[8]

Lastly, the "relationship between intelligence and leadership effectiveness may have to do with how stress affects leader-subordinate interactions. It may be that some studies in which more intelligent leaders were less effective primarily examined leadership challenges that were highly stressful. In that regard, Fiedler (1992) and Gibson (1992) found that smart, inexperienced leaders were less effective in stressful situations than less intelligent, experienced leaders."[9] One final note about intelligence and judgement comes from J. Gardner, when he states " there are bright people who lack

judgement altogether…there is nothing worse than a stupid person with a brilliant idea." [10] The conclusion drawn from this topic suggests that leadership effectiveness and intelligence are correlated and posed no argument that had gender specific influences. Next we will look at attitudes and leadership effectiveness.

Attitudes and Leadership

Attitude "refers to a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object, or issue." [11] Attitudes have two parts, which determines how they affect leadership, one being the affective component, the other being the behavioral component. The first component is how someone "feels" about doing something, while the second is how they behave or act regarding how they feel about something. [12] Leadership is affected by attitudes in the sense that a leader's attitude about their subordinates is dictated by one of two theories (X or Y) regarding attitudes.

Theory X in the most basic form, talks about leaders that view their subordinates in the most pessimistic manner. They feel that the best way to treat subordinates is by coercive or manipulative ways, since they feel that workers are naturally lazy and unmotivated. They see their role as one of tightly controlling the workforce and overseeing workers by creating a sense of fear or punishment for sub-standard job performance. [13]

Theory Y supports the belief that most people are motivated and want to do well, and are not in need of constant fear of punishment to be productive. This is the more optimistic view of human nature and is directly opposed to Theory X. [14] The conclusions made in reference to the theories above are as follows. "Leaders with a positive self-

concept and a Theory X philosophy tend to be bossy, pushy, and impatient; they also generally take on a dictatorial leadership style. Leaders with a negative self-concept and a Theory Y philosophy may seem afraid to make decisions, unassertive, and self-blaming.[15] While these two theories talk about the way leaders view the world and their general attitudes about the people they lead, there is no inference towards gender as having a bearing on attitudes on leadership or leadership effectiveness.

To continue the discussion on attitude and leadership, we must first look at some of the deeply held attitudes that many men bring with them as they enter military service, and some of these attitudes are directly opposed to women achieving leadership positions. In his book, *Women in the Military, Flirting with Disaster*, Brian Mitchell talks about his findings regarding women and their attitudes towards military service. As an example, he writes, "Women are much more likely to list practical, selfish reasons for joining the services, such as education, travel, and money. Men tend to give other reasons for joining the military, such as patriotism or love of country, but these lofty sentiments usually hide other, less currently respectable reasons. Most are too embarrassed to confess that they derive a profound sense of personal importance from their role as protector."[16] Many men see these reasons for joining the military as somehow less important as women are able to achieve the same status as they were once only afforded. This is supported by the following statement "The uniforms, the rank, the danger, the purposefulness, the opportunity to earn the respect of men and the admiration of women-all contribute to the military's enduring hold on the imagination of men and boys, and all are now threatened by the military's eagerness to present a female-friendly face."[17]

From the above, we can start to see how various attitudes play a role in the very existence of women in the military, not to mention attitudes that affect their rise to the highest levels of leadership.

Credibility and Leadership

The issue of leadership must be looked at from both the superiors' lens as well as the subordinate's lens. The thing that subordinates look for in a leader can be summed up in one word, credibility. Credibility is made up of four distinct things, which include honesty, competency, vision, and inspiration. We will now take a closer look at each of these components of credibility and see if there are any gender correlation's to examine.

Honesty, more than any other characteristic, was found to be the most sought after trait that subordinates wanted exhibited in their leaders. It is often looked at as the most critical aspect of successful leaders, for without honesty, how can we expect people to trust in their leaders. It is somewhat hard to define what honesty is, but "whatever leaders may say about their integrity, honesty, or ethical practices, constituents will judge leaders by their deeds"[18] not by their words. The single most important thing a leader can do to show they are honest, is to simply do what they say they are going to do. "Agreements not followed through, false promises, cover-ups, and inconsistency between word and deed are all indicators that an ostensible leader is not honest."[19]

The next criteria to consider regarding credibility are that of competency, for this is the second most desired attribute of leaders. There are technical competencies and there are more strategic competencies regarding leaders. At the higher levels of an organization, followers look to the latter in their leaders. A sense of providing "value added" measures is what is often thought of as competency in terms of leadership."[20]

Leaders do not have to actually know how to "turn the wrench" but if they have a knowledge of what is needed by the organization which will make it excel, that is what is referred to here as competency.

Last, but not least in the credibility arena, are the inspirational qualities followers look for in their leaders. People want to know where the organization is going, and they want to know what part they play in that vision. Followers want to see enthusiasm and motivational attributes from their leaders. If leaders can't inspire others to follow them and to do their best, then what is the point of being in charge? It is the ability to "communicate vision in ways that encourage"[21] people that is the mark of great leaders. To sum it up then, "when we believe a leader is credible-when we believe he or she is honest, competent, has a sense of the future and personal conviction about the path-then we somehow feel more trusting and secure around that leader. This in turn, makes us more willing to commit and work hard to achieve a shared vision."[22] One must note that credibility is a very fragile commodity, and that once a trust is broken, it may take years to rebuild. "Credibility is earned, not conferred by title or position."[23]

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Notes

[1] Howes and Stevenson. 1993. Women and the Use of Military Force. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. p. 81ibid, p.

[2] Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy. 1993: Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. Richard D. Irwin, INC, p.157.

[3] Computerworld, January 26, 1998, p. 73
[4] ibid, p. 143.
[5] Ibid, p. 144.
[6] Ibid, p. 145.
[7] Ibid, p. 145
[8] ibid, p. 145.

Notes

[9] ibid, p. 146.

[10] Gardner, John W.1990, On Leadership, The Free Press, N.Y., p. 48.

[11] Ibid, p. 173

[12] ibid, p. 173

[13] ibid, p. 174

[14] ibid, p. 174

[15] ibid, p. 176.

[16] Mitchell, Brian. 1998. Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster. Regnery Pub, Inc, p. 168-169.

[17] Ibid, p. 169.

[18] Taylor, Robert L. and Rosenbach, William E., Military Leadership, In Pursuit of Excellence, Westview Press, 1996, p. 167.

[19] Ibid, p. 168.

[20] Ibid, p. 168.

[21] Ibid, p. 169.

[22] Ibid, p. 169.

[23] Ibid, p. 169.

Chapter 4

Barriers for Women in Leadership

"Were it not for the intense political pressure, there would be virtually no women in the military today."[1]

—Brian Mitchell

Attitudes

Despite the increased presence of women in the military during the past twenty years, there has been a strong and persistent stance against their presence, especially in the higher ranks and in leadership positions. One need look no further than the scandal at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, or the harassment charges brought up against the Sergeant Major of the Army to attest to this belief. Perhaps one of the most vocal and detrimental books published incorporating these beliefs is Brian Mitchell's book, *Women in the Military, Flirting with Disaster*, published in 1998. In the opening quote of this chapter, he sets the tone for his book before the word of the first chapter is written. And the tone he sets continues on for the remaining three hundred and fifty pages. Quote after quote and chapter after chapter, Mitchell takes small subsets of facts that are not even related and patches them together in what is no less than an all out war against the very presence of women in the military. To sum up the stance that Mitchell makes throughout his book, there is a very negative attitude about the presence of women in the military.

Mitchell points out the only reason women are in the service at all today is completely based on civilian political pressure from constituents in congressional districts where the incumbents are only concerned with reelections, and not what is in the best interest of our national defense.

An example of some of the more blatant generalizations about the negative effects of having women in the military are as follows. "In recent years, however, the services have struggled to maintain this stance (positive aspects of women in the military), in the face of the mountains of evidence that the presence of women is damaging our armed forces. The trials of the Citadel and the Virginia Military Institute; the fatal crash of naval aviator Kara Hultgreen; the discharge of adulterous Air Force Lieutenant Kelly Flinn and a rash of other celebrated cases have exposed the dangerous effects of sex-based integration and affirmative action on standards, safety, training and discipline."[2] Mitchell finishes up the introduction of his book with the following quote that sets the stage for the rest of the book. He states "Library shelves groan under the weight of books praising the integration of women into the armed forces. *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster* is the only in-depth treatment that offers an alternative view of the revolution that threatens to leave the American military no more disciplined, no more efficient, no more fearsome, no more military than the United States Postal Service."[3] Mitchell goes on to complain that the standards at the military academies had to be vastly altered to compensate for the lack of performance by the women. Never in his book does he even attempt to attribute some or all of these findings to the basic physiological differences between men and women, and the need and even the necessity of these different standards.

Mitchell goes on paragraph after paragraph, page after page, attempting to point out the glaring problems with women in the service academies. He gives very little empirical support for his claims and makes gross generalizations on almost every topic he presents, but his bias is profoundly stated. One example is the way he discusses how devastated the men of the Air Force Academy's Class of 1980 felt about their "status" as cadets. "But the real losers were the men of the first integrated class. All of the men who entered the academy in the summer of 1976 were cheated out of much of the pride they might have felt in their status as air cadets. Those who finally graduated were so burned by the bungling of integration that it is hardly likely they share with earlier classes the same fondness for and devotion to the Air Force Academy. At least one graduate of the Class of 1980 was so embittered by the experience that he applied for and received, upon graduation, a service transfer to the United States Army."[4] While these statements may in fact be true, Mitchell gives no indication of how he comes up with his assumptions, nor does he even attempt to document interviews with former graduates and cite these interviews in his footnotes.

As retired General Max Thurman said, "War is not an equal opportunity endeavor."[5] It is interesting that these same people who state these types of positions, are the ones who are contributing to the ongoing debate on the value of women in the military. Statements like the ones above point out that not only are women viewed as outsiders, they are viewed as unnecessary and also very unwanted in many military circles still today. And it is also interesting that the men who feel so very threatened by the presence of women, and who talk about the value of women being negligible, are the ones who give personal opinions, and try to pass them off as fact. This is what Brian Mitchell does

throughout his book in almost every case against having women in the military. It is assumptions and stereotypes like those mentioned in the previous few pages that seem to support the bias facing women in leadership positions, and not any concrete or empirical evidence showing that women are less capable as leaders. It appears from these readings that bias is alive and well regarding women in the military.

Culture of Harassment and the Dynamics of the Masculine Mystique [6]

A second barrier to women achieving the higher leadership positions may very well be the basic masculine culture that is pervasive in the military. As Franke points out in her book, Ground Zero, and quotes conservative writer, George Gilder, "The good things are manly and collective; the despicable are feminine and individual".[7] In another portion of this same chapter, Gilder states, "when you want to create a solidaristic group of male killers that is what you do: you kill the woman in them."[8] Franke goes on to show that even in the early to mid 1990's, drill instructors were trying to drive out "femaleness" in the recruits, even the female recruits. This can only mean that to possess feminine characteristics is directly opposed to success in the military. How can we expect our young men and women to respect, follow and look up to female leaders, when from the very beginning of their careers, they have been trained to despise all things that are feminine. "The collective forces at work in the military culture demand women's marginalization. Accepting women as military peers is antithetical to the hyper-masculine identity traditionally promoted by the institution and sought by many military men."[9] It seems clear, to the author, from the most basic level, women are seen as an unnecessary evil in the presence of the services by many of the men they serve with and for and over. Franke goes on to document the sad state of affairs for the climate for

service women as recently as the late 1990's when male company commanders, First Sergeant's danced with hired female strippers at a unit party in Korea.[10] It does not take much imagination to figure out what the climate of this unit was regarding the role of women in the unit or the respect they were not given in light of the command climate. How then, can women come to be taken seriously when the climate of the masculine mystique and the denigration of women continue at all levels as we enter in the next century. The fact that more female cadets than males were selected as Thodes and Marshall scholars and more women entering West Point were valedictorians and salutatorians would never translate to leadership qualities in the young male culture.[11] A sobering testament to the seeming futility of women's acceptance in the military was seen in 1997 when a Colonel had a question and answer session with male cadets at West Point. "The cadets at the Thayer Award Room had stereotyped women as failures for almost twenty years and dismissed their strengths. And again we hear the same types of statements of the extreme "maleness" of the military in the following. "It's very macho the way (military) men see themselves as unique or special. One of the most important and guarded myths of the military is the necessity to maintain that hyped-up sense of maleness."[12] One senior at West Point sums it up nicely by stating, "The institution thinks it's making great strides and on the surface it is, but when you dig down, the culture really hasn't changed at all."[13] And lastly, "it was intolerable to them (the men) that all the things they think are worth dying for were suddenly going to be done by women."[14]

Stereotyping

The last and final barrier to examine is that of the stereotypes often associated with women, and how these stereotypes can limit a women's progress up the leadership chain. There seems to be a mindset that certain things are simply better suited for men to do than for women, and as noted above, the mere fact that a woman can accomplish a complex or dangerous task, minimizes the significance of the men who are doing that same task. Take for example a citing out of an ACSC leadership text, which innocently refers to recently promoted generals as being all males. "This profile describes the dominant, competitive, action-oriented, patriotic men drawn to physically adventurous activities."[15] The very fact that this text book, published in 1993, is used in the current ciriculum at ACSC, leads to the faulty assumption that all general officers attending advanced general officer training, are assumed to be male. This is even more irritating in light of the fact that there have been a few female general officers promoted to these high ranks in the past ten years in the Air Force. This assumption is further reinforced as we look at the listing of guest speakers in our leadership speaker series at ACSC. All of the general officers that have spoken to the ACSC CY99 class have been white males. If this does not suggest who the most important members of our profession are, it leaves little room for interpretation.

Notes

[1] Mitchell, Brian. 1998. Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster. Regnery Pub, Inc.p. xiii.
[2] Ibid, p. xv.
[3] Ibid, xvii.
[4] Ibid, 53.
[5] Ibid, p. 213.
[6] Francke, Linda Bird. 1997: Ground Zero. The Gender Wars in the Military. Simon and Schuster. P. 152.
[7] Ibid, p. 155.
[8] Ibid, p. 155.

Notes

[9] Ibid, p. 157.
[10] Ibid, p.164.
[11] ibid, p. 198
[12] ibid, p. 154-155
[13] ibid, p. 219.
[14] Ibid, p. 240.
[15] Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy. 1993: Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. Richard D. Irwin, INC, p. 155.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

"Men are marked out from the moment of birth to rule or be ruled."

—Aristotle

From the days of old to the modern era, many are still of the opinion that men are the ones who are destined to lead, and women, no matter how prepared or qualified, will serve as followers for most of their lives. The quote above, while certainly dated, nonetheless has a certain ring of truth that many today would not even attempt to refute. The fact that men are born to lead, and that the woman's place is at best, by his side, but never in front, is becoming harder and harder to accept and defend in the modern era.

In this paper, we have taken a close look at some of the most basic qualities needed in an effective leader, starting off with some commonly agreed upon definitions of what leadership actually is. While some qualities seem to be more present in males than females, there are still many females that posses the necessary characteristics to be very effective leaders. We looked at a few studies that analyzed leadership under research conditions and we have also have taken a close look at some of the more recent studies on this topic, some even conducted at our military academies. Yet nowhere in these studies was there any evidence to suggest that the most fundamental or required characteristic for leadership effectiveness is the gender of the leader.

Some historical views of leadership were presented, as well as some modern theories of leadership, and again, there was no mention of gender being a significant factor in terms of leadership effectiveness. We then went into detail on the most commonly agreed to characteristics or attributes of effective leadership, and again, there was a glaring omission relating to gender in most of the data presented.

There was information presented on the role of the follower in evaluating the effectiveness of the leader, and any gender-related issues that might come into play in this regard. And some of the data regarding transactional and transformational leadership portrayed females as being rated higher on the transformational leadership style than males. And lastly, we looked at how intelligence, attitude and credibility applied in the context of leadership and effectiveness. It is the author's firm belief that after doing exhaustive research on this topic and expecting to find all sorts of hard data on why males continue to climb the leadership ladder ahead of women, my conclusions have shown just the opposite. There is simply no clear-cut reason or theory or rationale to explain why women continue to lag in the leadership race both in the corporate world and in the military environment.

This leads me to state my personal conclusions as to why I think women are still lagging far behind in leadership positions in the military. My belief is simply that the military has been the sacred and hallowed ground for men to take themselves to some of the most extraordinary levels of mental and physical tasks. They have and will continue to see themselves as the protectors of the feminine gender and as natural leaders since they are physiologically the stronger sex. They will continue to use their superior strength and stamina to attempt to show why women are not as effective or competent as

leaders, despite the fact that many of today's modern leadership challenges have little to do with physical strength. And lastly, they will continue to act in ways that have naturally drawn men together in male bonding situations which fundamentally exclude women, and look down upon women who attempt to emulate the very characteristics they look up to in their fellow men.

It is sad but true that many men in today's modern military still have some of the age old attitudes regarding women in the services, and most will not admit openly that this is the case. One only has to look at some of the closing comments quoted by Brian Mitchell, to see that while we certainly have come a long way, there are obstacles that are so deeply rooted in the male military subculture, it is very doubtful we will ever see full gender equity at the highest ranks in the U.S. military. This paper attempts to simply be some food for thought as the next generation of leaders takes command in today's military. If this even provides one senior male officer a starting point to judge, reward, mentor and promote only based on capability, and not gender, then this paper will have served its purpose.

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